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BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

State Board of Charities
and Reform

JANUARY 1, 1927

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Helena, Montana,
January 15, 1927.

To His Excellency,
Hon. J. E. Erickson, Governor.

My dear Sir:

The following report, covering the activities of this Board for the past two years, is hereby respectfully submitted.

The State Board of Charities and Reform was created for the purpose of regularly visiting all State Institutions of charity and reform which are in receipt of public money; to be thoroughly familiar with such Institutions; investigate complaints and serve in a general advisory capacity.

There are three members on the board; they receive no compensation but are allowed actual expenses while on official duty.

During the past two years the Board has visited regularly, not only the State Institutions but also the House of the Good Shepherd, St. Joseph's Orphanage, and Florence Crittenden Home, as these last named receive money from various counties.

The Board have also frequently made special visits on matters of importance—either because of requests coming from the Governor, or the Superintendents of Institutions, or to investigate various complaints.

Reports of all visits are filed with the Governor; also reports of business transacted and expense incurred are filed with the State Board of Examiners.

The Secretary of the Board has at her own expense during the past three years, devoted a great deal of time and energy in speaking before various groups on the necessity of industrializing the State Penitentiary.

The Secretary also carries on a large correspondence within the State, and with other State Boards, respecting our State

Institutions, their functions, and the care and treatment of all the various phases of those committed to the care of the State.

While this Board has always kept well within its appropriation of four hundred dollars per year for the last two years, its efficiency could be greatly increased were the appropriation slightly raised.

The occasional employment of clerical help, at present prohibitive because of lack of funds, would be very valuable to the State.

We respectfully suggest that the amount of \$500 per year, as was formerly allowed, be appropriated for use of this Board.

(Signed)

FLORA I. PACE,
JAMES F. McNAMEE,
CORA E. THOMAS.

The State Hospital for the Insane at Warm Springs has been visited many times during the past two years. (The change of personnel of practically the entire official staff, made such visits seem advisable.)

As a very complete report regarding this, the largest of the State's Charitable Institutions, is printed bi-annually and available to all, we will confine our report to a few notices.

For the first time in the history of the Institution, the male idiots and imbeciles, numbering a hundred or more, are properly cared for in an addition to the Main Hospital, known as Cottage G. Strictly speaking, this class of patients do not belong to this Institution, but as there is not another place for them, they are well taken care of here.

This is the only new building in the past two years, but two or three are badly needed.

First, a new hospital for men, to take the place of the very old and crowded building, one of the oldest on the grounds.

Second, some sort of a community hall, where moving pictures and social times may be enjoyed. The moving picture machine was acquired without cost to the State, but the only place it can be shown is in the woman's dining room, which cannot accommodate half the patients who would like to enjoy this form of amusement. When we consider that this is practically the only recreation that can be enjoyed by a large majority of the patients, and see the eagerness with which they crowd into the small, ill-ventilated room, sitting on hard wooden benches or tables without a murmur of complaint, it surely is apparent that better quarters should be provided.

There are about 150 employees here, and they must make their own amusement; and there is no hall where dances and social times might be enjoyed. A community hall is a very great need and it is hoped may be purchased.

There are between 1350 and 1400 patients here. An efficient corps of physicians and nurses are in charge; the office staff has been reduced in the past two years, lessening the over-head expense.

The buildings are always immaculately clean, the patients well fed and well cared for. Visitors are always welcome, and are courteously treated, and every tax payer of Montana who

visits this large Hospital will feel proud of its efficiency, beauty and humanity.

To Dr. H. A. Bolton, who has been Superintendent for only two years, great credit is due, and this Board feels that his work cannot be too highly commended. He has had the difficult task of building up a new staff of physicians and supervisors; but his knowledge of the needs of the Institution, with his own splendid personality are reflected in the great success which is attending his work.

The State Orphans' Home is located at Twin Bridges, and has about two hundred to two hundred and twenty-five children in its care.

The Home has been subjected to some criticism during the past two years, and on this account, this Board has made an extra number of trips to the Home, some of them at the request of the Superintendent.

A full report of our findings at various times has been filed with the Governor.

The last trip was made unexpectedly in October, 1926; we found the children in good condition. A very few looked somewhat under-nourished, a much smaller per cent than the average school room would show. The large majority looked healthy and well cared for.

The hospital was nearly empty; only two or three children with slight colds, and one baby, quite ill, who has recovered.

The Home has an excellent school, with all the eight grades and sometimes the first year of the high school course.

A new gymnasium and swimming pool, added recently, are a great benefit, and constantly used.

A new administration building, a dormitory for the older girls, and a separate building for the Superintendent and family are sadly needed. At present this is all taken care of in one building; a building so old and worn that it is impossible to keep it attractive looking. There should be also better facilities for vocational training for the older girls in the line of all domestic economy.

We should consider that this is the State Institution that is taking care of the perfectly healthy, normal girls and boys;

two hundred of them who will be citizens of our State in a few years, and no expense should be spared, necessary to their well-being.

We have found that Mr. George and his wife are taking good care of these children, and our only suggestion is the one above noted.

The State Industrial School at Miles City has been visited by two members of the Board at two different times during the past two years; expense involved prohibiting more frequent visits.

There are about 125 boys, ranging in age from eight to eighteen years, in the school; all of the boys attend the very excellent grade school at the institution, and there are usually eight or ten sufficiently advanced to attend the high school in the town. Three teachers are employed; one of them acting also as director of physical training in the gymnasium.

We especially commend the system of industrial training at this school. In addition to regular school training, every boy must work at several branches of work.

Much of the repairing of buildings, as well as some of the actual construction of new buildings; the making and repairing of all new and old furniture is done by the boys.

All clothing, such as suits, uniforms, shoes and the like is made and kept repaired by the boys.

Printing is taught—a very attractive little sheet is issued monthly, as well as other printing used by the institution.

A large farm and splendid dairy, supplying the institution with all the necessary products in these lines, is operated by the boys of the school.

In the fall, the up-to-date canning apparatus is operated, and hundreds of gallons of fruit and vegetables are canned for winter use.

A much larger quantity of these things could be produced and canned, if there were a market for them, and the Board respectfully suggests that perhaps tomatoes, corn or some of the smaller vegetables could be purchased for use in the smaller institutions.

Church and Sunday school are regularly held. The moving picture machine with the gymnasium, as well as out-of-door sports of all kinds furnish ample recreation.

We most heartily endorse the work of this institution. The boys are happy, healthy and well cared for. That the institution is successful in the purpose for which it is maintained, is shown by the fact that between 85 and 90 per cent of the boys "make good," and become citizens of whom we may be proud.

To Mr. A. C. Door, the efficient Superintendent, is due the success of this institution, which compares favorably with that of other states.

One of the needs of the institution is a Parole Supervisor; about 150 boys are out on parole, and should be kept in touch with, if the work so well begun is to be continued. Also the environment from which the boys come should be visited, to determine the causes of delinquency. It is manifestly impossible for the Superintendent to leave the institution and do these things, and a Parole Supervisor would be of great benefit.

The Girls' Vocational School, located in the valley north of Helena, is the newest and by far the finest of the State Institutions of Charity or reform; all the buildings and equipment are new, modern and up-to-date in every respect.

Here, about one hundred girls live, varying in age from ten to eighteen years.

Various members of the Board very frequently visit the school, it being easy of access, and, since its inception constantly being added to.

The school is a model in every respect. Miss Edith Kassing has been superintendent from the beginning and the whole project is the result of her far-seeing vision.

The school is truly "vocational," for every industry possible is taught here.

Each girl must regularly take her turn at all the domestic training, including sewing, while dairying in every form, gardening, bee culture, rug weaving and basketry are taught to those girls who show special fitness for the work. Every girl

must spend one-half of every day in school, during the ordinary school year; a few are in high school. Every advantage is given to help train these girls into useful womanhood, and that they are successful is shown by the fact that since the building of the school, six years ago, more than 75 per cent are making good—either within the jurisdiction of the school, or without.

The farm is not yet completely cultivated; many improvements are still to be made around the grounds, but as the work is nearly all done by the girls, it is a matter of a few years to complete much that is begun.

The school is easy of access to Helena, and is well worth anyone's taking in the enjoyment of the beauties of the school, and the interest it inspires.

The Board would call especial attention to the situation at the State Penitentiary at Deer Lodge. About 450 men are imprisoned here. They are well taken care of. Food is abundant and well cooked. The buildings are always kept in excellent condition, and the modern cells are as comfortable as can be made. A fine theatre, built by the men themselves a few years ago, furnishes moving pictures and other entertainment two or three times a week.

There is only one improvement to suggest—that of employment for the prisoners.

The State owns two farms, and leases four or five more; this with the work necessary about the institution keeps about one-half the men occupied at least in the summer, although about half the number could do the work. The warden uses all the men he possibly can, but even then at least half of them are unoccupied all of the time.

This institution costs the State about \$175,000 per year; besides the cost of maintaining dependent families in every county. This institution can be and should be made entirely self-supporting.

In addition to lowering the cost, the men would be much more fit to meet the day of their release, were they trained to work. It is well-nigh criminal to turn a man loose, with fifteen dollars in his pocket, and expect him to go straight, after keeping him in idleness for a period of years.

Our present warden, Mr. Middleton, is heartily in sympathy with this program. He is an excellent executive, with a fine understanding of the men and their needs. We have only commendation for him and his method.

STATE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND

The State School for the Deaf and Blind, also for the Feeble Minded is located at Boulder. Although under one superintendent, Mr. H. J. Menzemer, the two schools are entirely separate, and are situated about a quarter of a mile apart.

At the first named school, in addition to the regular course education, vocational education is also carried on. Several phases of domestic art for the girls, cabinet making, carpenter work and printing are especially stressed for boys, in order to fit them for a useful life of independence. About eighty children are in this school.

The school for feeble-minded is in reality more of a home than a school, for not a great deal can be taught many of these unfortunates; neither can they ever be dismissed to be self-supporting, but must continue to be cared for by the State. Some of these children can be taught to sew, perform domestic duties and weave rugs and baskets. Many of the boys work about the farm. All this must be done under supervision, however.

To keep these people happy and well cared for and prevent them from being a menace to the State, is the utmost that can be hoped for.

Mr. Menzemer has been superintendent of these institutions for many years, and has a thorough knowledge of all their needs, and the ability to successfully manage both places. In addition, his kindly disposition and genuine liking for all the children in both institutions make him an ideal superintendent, and our State is indeed fortunate to be able to keep him here.

THE STATE TUBERCULOSIS SANITARIUM

The State Tuberculosis Sanitarium located at Galen is one of the newer institutions.

Starting ten years ago with a capacity of twenty-five beds, its capacity has been increased to one hundred and fifty beds. All of these are occupied, and there is invariably a long waiting list. The women's cottages are fairly adequate for the needs of the institution, but there must elapse some time before men who are recommended can be admitted.

The work done at this institution is especially appealing to all humanity; for the healing of sick bodies, sending them forth with restored health to their families, must meet with universal approval. Dr. Vidal, who has been for several years superintendent of this institution is a man of highest character, and unquestioned ability for this particular work, and entire credit is due to him and to his splendid corps of assistants for the great work being done.

Working side by side with this institution to fight the great plague, is the Montana Tuberculosis Association. Although not receiving one cent of State aid, its work is invaluable, and our Board desires to particularly call attention to this association in this connection.

The children's pavilion at Galen, the newest of the buildings, is very beautiful. It has a capacity of about thirty beds, and is usually full. Even in the short time, about three years, since its completion, it has been of inestimable benefit to the children, many of whom have been treated and sent home well and on the way to recovery.

